NewsFlash

Bass Pro Shops opens Round Rock store

120,000-square-foot store adds to City's mix of destination retailers

Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in Round Rock held its grand opening with an Evening for Conservation on Wednesday, June 10. The event featured an all-star cast of celebrities from the world of sports, entertainment and the great outdoors.



Mayor Alan McGraw, third from left, joins Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris for the ribbon cutting.

Bass Pro announced in August 2013 it would open a store here after the City Council approved an economic incentive to lure the destination retailer to Round Rock. It is the third destination retailer targeted by the City to open here. The others are Round Rock Premium Outlets and IKEA.

Located at 200 Bass Pro Drive, the 120,000-square-foot store also features the popular Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill restaurant. This 20,000-square-foot, one-of-a-kind concept features a unique atmosphere and is designed for family fun and dining, and includes a 16-lane bowling alley.

Bass Pro Shops was named as one of the "Top 10 Hottest Brands in America" by Advertising Age magazine.

Known for providing a fun outdoor experience indoors, a typical Bass Pro Shops retail

continued other side

City Council approves incentives for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to bring 270 jobs to City

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) is relocating its Texas regional office to Round Rock. The project will bring over 270 positions, with an average salary of at least \$70,000 including benefits, to a new 100,000-square-foot Class A office building that will be developed by Live Oak-Gottesman.

The relocation is estimated to be complete in July 2016. The City Council approved Thursday, June 11, a mix of incentives to bring HMH to Round Rock.

"We are honored that HMH has chosen Round Rock to call 'home' and appreciate the trust they are putting in us," Mayor Alan McGraw said. "They will be a valuable partner, and I look forward to them becoming an integral part of our vibrant, thriving community."

HMH is a leading provider of pre-K-12 education content, services, and cutting-edge technology solutions across a variety of media. Serving more than 50 million students in over 150 countries worldwide, it is focused on engaging and effective educational content and experiences that change people's lives by fostering passionate curious learners. Headquartered in Boston, HMH has 20 U.S. offices and six more located in international locales including Ireland and

South Korea. Its new Round Rock office will be constructed in La Frontera.

"We are excited to add another international company to our business community," said Ben White, vice president of economic development at the Round Rock Chamber. "Adding an additional Class A office building in Round Rock has been a priority, and we're thrilled to partner with Live Oak-Gottesman and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to make it happen."

The incentives are based on the construction of an office building valued at a minimum of \$14.25 million, with an additional \$3 million in improvements, along with the employment of 270.

City property taxes on the building will be 100 percent abated in years 1-2, 75 percent in years 3-4, 50 percent in years 5-6, and 25 percent in years 7-10. City property taxes on the improvements will be 100 percent abated in year 1, and 75 percent abated in years 2-3.

The City will also make payments totaling \$350,000 over four years to HMH, and waive up to \$25,000 in site preparation and construction fees.

City earns budget award for 19th consecutive year

The Government Finance Officers Association is pleased to announce the City of Round Rock has received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget. This marks the 19th consecutive year the City of Round Rock has earned this honor.

The award represents a significant achievement. It reflects Round Rock's commitment to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the award, Round Rock satisfied nationally recognized guidelines that assess how well the budget serves as:

- ★ a policy document
- ★ a financial plan
- * an operations guide
- ★ a communications device

Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in all four categories, and the 14 mandatory criteria within those categories, to receive the award.

For budgets including fiscal period 2013, 1,424 entities received the Award. Award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America.

The Government Finance Officers Association is a nonprofit professional association serving over 17,600 government finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program is the only national program in governmental budgeting.

In Brief

Yoga on the Plaza

Experience yoga in the outdoors at 8 a.m., the second Saturday of each month, Prete Main Street Plaza, 221 East Main Street.

Bring a towel or mat and water.

5K for Clay

Mark your calendar for the 12th Annual 5K for Clay at the Clay Madsen Recreation Center Saturday, August 8. The run/walk starts and finishes at the Clay Madsen Recreation Center utilizing the Greater Lake Creek Trail. Medallions are awarded to top overall male/female placed winners in each age division.

Register at RoundRockRecreation.com

Outdoor Family Campout and National Hunting and Fishing Day

Spend the night at Old Settler's Park Friday, September 25 for the Parks and Recreation sponsored Outdoor Family Campout. Registration includes two meals, how-to session, use of demonstration equipment and t-shirt. Register at RoundRockRecreation.com



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Department offers
Safety Exchange Zones
Zones offers public meeting

Round Rock Police

Zones offers public meeting location to help with safer exchanges of online transactions

The Round Rock
Police Department
public parking area
and lobby have
been designated as
Safety Exchange
Zones during normal business hours,

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those who prefer a location away from their homes to exchange goods purchased online or by classifieds can make arrangements to meet at 2701 N. Mays Street.

The effort is being offered to help deter fraudulent transactions and assist in maintaining privacy of residents. These locations can also be used for custodial exchanges.

Safety Exchange Zones are under video surveillance at all times. The Department is not responsible for the validity of transactions, and will not be involved nor oversee the business conducted amongst participating parties. For more information on the Safety Exchange Zone call 512-218-5500.

Round Rock earns another affordability top ranking

Study compares income with cost of living

Round Rock has earned another distinction as being one of the most affordable places to live in the United States. The No. 3 ranking came from Nerdwallet, which distinguished between "cheap" and "affordable" by comparing income with cost of living.

The study looked at median household income, cost of living, housing, utilities, transportation, health care index, and goods and services.

To find the top places for affordability, NerdWallet investigated price variations to assess where a dollar stretches the furthest in the United States.

From Nerdwallet: "Not surprisingly, data on median income from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey revealed that many of the cheapest places in the U.S. are also where residents earn the least. In our study, we make a distinction between 'cheap' and 'affordable' by comparing a place's median income with its cost of living to find truly affordable places."

Key findings from the study:

★ Wealthier places are more affordable.

Despite a higher cost of living, the gains from a higher median income in wealthier

places are more than the increased cost of living there.

- ★ Cost of living is clustered. Sure, there are outliers like New York City, New York, and Honolulu, Hawaii, where the cost of living is 122 percent and 74 percent above the U.S. average respectively, but the cost of living in most places is within a small range around the national average.
- ★ Within a place, costs can be diverse. Just because a place is affordable in one category, such as groceries, doesn't mean the same is true for housing or utilities.

In February, Round Rock topped the list for *Livability.com's 10 Best Affordable Places to Live in 2015.*

- 1. Plano, Texas
- 2. Edmond, Okla.
- 3. Round Rock, Texas
- 4. Juneau, Alaska
- 5. Midland, Texas
- 6. Hilton Head Island, S.C.
- 7. Scottsdale, Ariz.
- 8. Rio Rancho, N.M.
- 9. Anchorage, Alaska
- 10. Tracy, Calif.

Bass Pro Shops... continued

store features more than 3,500 antiques and artifacts, up to 400 trophy fish and wildlife mounts, and many murals depicting local scenes.

Free Bass Pro Shops outdoor skills workshops will be offered throughout the year on a regular basis and will include topics such as outdoor cooking, nature photography, fly fishing, camping, archery and more. Bass Pro Shops is widely recognized for their efforts in conservation and outdoor education.

Bass Pro Shops will host more than 120 million people visiting their 92 stores and Tracker Marine Centers across America and Canada this year. The average customer stays 2 ½ hours and drives an average distance of 50 plus miles.